

## **Post Gulf War Assessment :**

### **A Palestinian Perspective Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi**

#### (1) Preface

As the decade of the 1990s began we witnessed Mikhail Gorbachev initiate reforms in the Soviet Union, "Perestroika" and "Glasnost", the winds of change sweeping Eastern Europe, the collapse of Communist domination in many countries, the fall of the Berlin Wall (November 9, 1989), the reunification of Germany and the debate over the future superpower deterrent relationship.

These events and their repercussions have burst on to the world scene. News of one event may have overshadowed others. Ordinary people became confused by these and their causes and effects, especially with the "changes" in the world's balance of power. It seemed as if people are acknowledging that a new chapter in world history has been ushered.

The Gulf crisis, and later the war, came as the first phase of this new chapter. Unexpected changes have taken place in the structure of regional and international coalitions, although unlike past crises in the Arab region, ruling regimes and leaders remained unchanged and untouched.

The United States led the largest world coalition under the umbrella of international legitimacy (The UN Security Council). It might be true to say, "had the coalition not been undertaken under (UN Mandate, it would never have existed" (1). It might also be true to say that "the Vietnam Complex is over, both in terms of the American national psyche and everyone else's perception"(2) As one American expert said; "The danger that lies ahead is not in under-estimating American power before the crisis, but in overestimating it after the crisis" (3). Finally, the performance of President Bush in taking decisions, leading the coalition and winning "Desert Storm" in the Gulf, makes one wonder how long he can keep the "coalition" together and continue to build the new world order?

As for the Soviet Union, it was not a member of the coalition, nor did it take part in the military operations. It chose to lead the political battle through diplomatic channels and its new relationships with Washington, Paris and the other European capitals, as well as through its traditional relations in the region and with Iraq. However, the Soviet Union could neither fulfill the short-term and the long-term goals to which it aspired, nor could it forge a new alliance with those who opposed the war and were still outside the sphere of Washington's influence or who showed solidarity with Iraq.

With the end of the war, the Arab world enters a new era. Months, or even years, may elapse before its waters calm and its affairs, although they are high on the agenda of many a world capital, are settled. This is a moment of opportunity may soon pass, or other events might occur unexpectedly thus pushing Middle East issues down on the world agenda. The new reality in the Arab region is that there can be no return to the status quo ante. It also means the beginning of "change" in the Arab psyche which has been shaken to its roots as it dived into the Gulf war.

The Western countries of the coalition will prove that they have learned nothing from the war, if they do not recognize and acknowledge the inseparable connection between the various problems of the region(4), even though the image may sometimes appear otherwise. In addition, they should recognize the effects of any event in the Arab world on Arab masses. Consequently, the self-interested priority should be in solving problems in which all parties, without exception, have an important role to play despite the current desire of some to bypass or drop a certain party or to find an alternative to it.

As for Israel, it does not have the luxury to stay put with the present status quo and to go through the rapidly developing changes untouched (5). Israel has an options. Its first alternative is to remain a testing ground for small wars and modern weapons (South Lebanon, the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights,

Entebbe, Tunis and the land of the Intifada), and so continue as the peg upon which all reasons and justifications for the continuation of local and regional wars are hung. Israel will continually pay for this in the form of the unending Journey of the Jew"; with the deeply rooted fear which obsesses the thinking and behavior of its society. The second alternative for Israel is to become part of or a party to the Arab Middle East "house", in which it will participate within the limits and framework of a new all-encompassing equation whose early stages are being formulated now by more than one capital in the world through new regional and international alliances.

The needs, interests and desires of the directly and indirectly involved parties in the region will be the moving factors for decision-making and directing the changes. Two of those factors may converge or diverge. But the search for a bottom-line on which these three factors meet, could be the logical first step in formulating post-war society within a new context. The challenges of "change" will go through a gray area for a transitional period. Their geographical area may expand and their duration may be long or short. They will be fraught with hardships and losses. They will also witness more divisions while moving towards far-reaching domestic, social and political changes. This "change" will, to some extent, be captive to the Arab mind and culture both of which differ in perception from that of the Western mind and culture. These two factors are greatly influenced by geography, history, religion, Arab identity and the deep rooted connection between them, despite the political borders separating them and despite the different attitudes and interests of rulers in the Arab region.

The starting point then, for projecting a picture of what is anticipated or desired for the post-Gulf era, requires a review of the historical background to the crisis of the region, the role of major parties, and the Palestinian file.

## (2) Historical Reminiscences

During World War I, the Arabs and the Jews sided with the Allies and fought with them. Each party received contradictory promises and pledges (McMahon 1915, Balfour 1917). The representative of the Arabs (Prince Faisal) and the representative of the Jews (Haim Weizman) at the First International Conference (Versailles 1919), failed to employ the Fourteen Points, put forward by the American President Woodrow Wilson, to achieve the aspirations of their respective parties, despite the recommendations of the international Committee of Inquiry (King-Crane). A new geo-political map, which divided the Arab World, was imposed. It fulfilled the interests of the Allies and curbed the national aspirations of Arabs and Jews alike. The "New World order" was formulated while obviously ignoring "the right of self-determination of peoples", which was a major point in the American President's 14 points. The Americans were not yet ready for the idea of the "New World Order", or for having a role in it. Consequently, they voted not to join the League of Nations. The Arab region came under new headings of international legitimacy such as Trusteeship and Mandate. The Arabs and Jews entered a sphere of international, communal and self-challenges. Neither the, Arabs nor the Jews were to participate in reshaping the map, nor were they to be able to amend its lines through principles of international legitimacy such as self-determination, independence, sovereignty or freedom. Furthermore, Arabs and Jews, failed in their joint dialogue to agree on a common formula for the map of the region under such titles as unity, union, or self-government for the Jews in part of Palestine in unity with the Arabs in one state. The allies continued to disregard the cries emanating from the region in the form of revolutions and uprisings by Palestinians, as well as revolutions in Syria, Iraq and Egypt.

It is noteworthy that the Arab-Jewish "dialogue" continues in Arab and European capitals in an effort to explore positions, views and possibilities of common understanding or agreement, sometimes without the intervention of a third party, but more often with such an intervention (6)

In the interval between the two World Wars, there was a serious effort to resolve the Palestine Question and the Arab-Jewish conflict. The St. James Conference of 1939 was convened in London with full participation of the Palestinian legitimate representatives (The Arab Higher Committee), the Jews (The Jewish Agency) and the Arab countries (Foreign Ministers).

As a result of this conference, the representative of international legitimacy, Britain, issued a "White Paper". It called for the establishment of one Palestinian State for both Arabs and Jews. It paper was not implemented. It was replaced by the "Partition" resolution under the umbrella of international legitimacy (UN. resolution # 181 of 1947).

During World War II, the Arabs stood divided between the Allies and the Axis. In the aftermath of the war, a new international map was drawn up. Again, the call of the then U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt for shaping the New World Order in accordance with the principles of the four freedoms was ignored. Instead, the 1945 Yalta Conference formulae were adopted for the region in accordance with the interests of the Allies and under the umbrella of new international legitimacy (the United Nations), namely: bilateral treaties, and joint Alliances. As the world entered the Cold War era and in the wake of the Axis crimes, especially against the Jews, the Zionist movement began to reap the fruits of world sympathy and to utilize it for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This sympathy was exploited politically, economically and financially as well as manpower, to build up the initial infrastructure of the Jewish state under the umbrella of international legitimacy, that is to say under the auspices of the British Mandate as conferred by the UN was finally realized in May 1948. It is worth noting that dialogue between Arabs (Palestinians, in particular) and Jews, continued, even during times of conflict with a third party, i.e. Britain. Meetings were held in Arab and European capitals and sometimes in Palestine itself. These meetings took place with the participation and encouragement of a third party. However they bore no results as far as the relations between the two sides were concerned.

The Gulf crisis (2 August 1990 - 28 February 1991) was certainly a significant event for the region, in view of the membership, roles, and interests of the coalition countries led by the United States and in light of the gravity of the challenges posed by Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the possibilities which encountered the decision-makers in Washington and Moscow. During this crisis, the Arabs were divided: some fought alongside the coalition, others rallied against the war, and others showed solidarity with Iraq. Meanwhile, the Jewish State received Iraq's missiles without retaliation. By doing so, Israel regained the sympathy of the Western World. Israel utilized this sympathy, investing it politically, economically, financially and in terms of public opinion. It emerged, temporarily, from the isolation imposed on it as a result of its oppressive policies and practices against the Bland and people of the Palestinian Intifada. Palestinian-Israeli meetings and the dialogue which had been going on throughout the occupation both inside and outside and which had assumed an advanced framework and method during the first three years of the intifada, came to a halt following by the "divorce" declared by the Israeli Left on the first day of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, 2 August 1990.

The Palestinians experienced unique suffering during the Gulf war. They neither fought alongside the coalition as some Arabs did, nor could they realize a political breakthrough by bringing the Arabs to agree on an "Arab solution" to the Gulf crisis. The Palestinians were not alone in this. Some Arab leaders, such as king Hussein also sought such a solution. Indeed, the Palestinians, despite any argument to the contrary, lived as an interacting part in the Arabs' most modern crisis. They are part of the "linkage equation" in the problems of the area (Iraq's initiative of 12 August 1990). They are part of the society and civilization of the Gulf, with about half a million Palestinians living or working in various Gulf States. They are dispersed throughout the Arab world affecting it and being affected by it. Lastly, they suffer the "new" Israeli policy of dealing with the Intifada. This involves such restrictions as the separation of towns, villages and camps from one another and from Jerusalem. The Palestinians are exposed to the blows of occupation against their economic achievements with the aim of limiting or paralysing their economy. Israeli policy during the war brought tightened restrictions on their movement, travel and work. Arrest campaigns against Palestinian workers were doubled. Moreover, the Palestinians witnessed the physical assassinations of their historical leadership abroad (Abu Iyad in Tunis on 15 January 1991) and "political assassinations" of the leadership inside (distorting and deviating statements by Faisal Husseini, and the arrest of Dr. Sari Nuseibeh). Israel has also carried out a new policy of disengagement between the West Bank and Gaza Strip and Israel according to an Israeli timetable and agenda. Israel began to prepare the ground for more than one political scenario and included extremist Rahvaam Ze'evi in the Israeli government. Under these circumstances, some Palestinians took to the roofs of their houses to applaud and cheer the Iraqi missiles reaching Israeli cities. It seemed as if they were expressing their own

understanding of the logic of "Linkage" between the issues of the area. The missiles and bombs that were hitting Baghdad and other Iraqi cities, and the bombs, gas and bullets that hit Palestinian towns, villages and camps during the Intifada, were some extent counterbalanced by the hitting of Israeli cities. Yet other Palestinians were quick to call their Israeli friends and acquaintances to enquire about their safety. This was also an expression of their understanding of the logic of "linkage" between the life and future of human beings in this region, be they Palestinians or Israelis, and of their rejection of the logic of war as a means to solve their problems and the logic of devastating the homes of others to build a future on their debris.

With the end of the Gulf War, the various capitals of the coalition countries led by Washington, the capitals of the anti-war countries and those of Arab solidarity with Iraq, all came face-to-face with the "challenges" presented by the aftermath of the war, specifically the new World Order as perceived by the U.S. President Bush and his two doctrines: democracy and security with the fall of geographical borders. Would the interests of the coalition countries, and those of Washington in particular, allow for the international legitimacy framework to continue operating as before, even at the risk of uniform application

### (3) The Attitudes of the Major Parties

#### **A-The United States**

The insurmountable obstacle that has been plaguing US Foreign Policy in the Middle East for the past four decades is manifested in two ways: firstly, its inability to bridge the gap between the "declaration" of policy, and its application. This gap between declared principles and actual practice has grown even wider over the passage of time (7)

Second, its inability to reconcile or to adopt one of two alternatives of diplomatic action. The first option, i.e., the comprehensive formula, means having a plan to solve all major conflicts in the region in an integral manner. The second option is the step-by step formula. This means the start of a slow-paced process, thus moving from one issue to another after dividing the problems of the region, Bin the hope that overcoming or scoring a success in one step may pave the way towards a solution or towards softening the next step (8): Throughout this process, US presence is essential the region, thus diminishing if not obscuring, the presence of other world powers.

The agenda of previous US administrations has contributed to mercurial ups and downs for the problems of the Middle East. Sometimes such problems were written off the agenda altogether. When we evaluate the policies of these administrations towards the Middle East, we notice that they were predominantly characterized by "imbalance" between the comprehensive outlook and the partial Bone. In addition, there is a double standard in dealing with the region's issues.

In the 70s, the declared policy of President Jimmy Carter called for a "Palestinian Homeland". But the actual policy resulted in the Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel without the participation or consent of the Palestinians. The "comprehensive" outlook raised the issues of human rights, whereas the applied policy was ineffective before the outrages committed by the Israeli military government against the Palestinian people, its land and rights. The policy of a step-by-step formula revealed that it left the door open to the perpetuation of the problems of the region. In addition, the parties to such a solution have exploited and distorted policy's texts. Menahem Begin emptied the equation of land for peace of its substance: he only withdrew from Sinai. Meanwhile the other two partners, Washington and Cairo, could not do anything to rectify or stop that deviation (9) The double standard in dealing with the issues took the form of massive aid from the U.S. to Israel without taking into consideration the deteriorating living conditions of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and in the Arab countries hosting them.

During the Reagan administration, the implementation of US policy took the form of actual involvement in the Lebanese crisis. The "declaration" of policy came later in the initiative of the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1982. The option of the solution by stages, and the plan of US Secretary of State George Shultz, on 6th March 1988,

revealed how impotent and fruitless they were in the face of "rejection by the concerned parties (10). The gap between the "declaration" of policy and its "application" was also clear in the attitude of both the White House and the State Department towards Israeli settlement in the Occupied Territories. Both of them stated that Israeli settlement is illegitimate and illegal. Moreover, the State Department has annually reported Israeli violations of Palestinian human rights in the Occupied Territories. US policy "application" however, is represented in financing Israeli settlements and supporting Israeli practices by using the US veto at the UN Security Council. The "implementation" of US policy came in the form of imposing Washington's famous conditions for engaging in dialogue with the PLO, which finally started on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1988. The comprehensive formula required that all parties accept those conditions (UN resolutions 242 and 338, renunciation of terrorism, and recognizing the right of all countries in the region, including the Israelis and Palestinians, to live in secure and recognized borders). Based on this comprehensive formula, the UN Secretary General would be able to call all involved parties and the five permanent members of the Security Council to convene in an International Conference to find a political solution based on the principle of "land for peace".

Things have not changed during the first three years of the Bush administration, whose policy is a methodical continuation of the previous administration. The gap between declared principle and actual practice has continued. An example of this is President Bush's three-point plan announced on April 4<sup>th</sup>, 1989: the importance of Israel's security, the ending of occupation in the Occupied Arab Territories and the realization of Palestinian political rights. The implementation of those three points took a completely opposite direction. How could the security of one country or a group of countries in the region be guaranteed while arms are flowing from all the capitals of the world into that region? Washington participated in this competition for arms, if not in directing and encouraging the participants in it. How could the Israeli occupation of Arab territories be ended while the US vetoes UN Security Council resolutions and recommendations, especially recently, when the international body saw fit to send an enquiry commission to look into the Rishon Letzion crime against Palestinians of 20<sup>th</sup> May 1990? The US also introduced amendments to the UN Security Council resolutions condemning Israel for murdering Palestinians in the El-Haram El-Sharif in Jerusalem on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1990. Thirdly, how could the Palestinians achieve their legitimate political rights when they are deprived of the simplest form of human freedom? Thousands of them are behind bars. Others are beyond the borders. They are denied freedom of thought, education and expression. Their institutes are closed, their press censored, their movement, travel and work restricted. Money is meager and its sources shut off. Even the option of candidacy and election, if any, has to be channeled through the occupying authority. Their leaders and representatives are denied an entry visa to the US to address UN Security Council and urge the world body to put an end to these Israeli measures.

The US gap between policy and practice grew even wider when President Bush characterized Jerusalem as an occupied city. At the same time his administration finances plans and programs for Israeli settlements and remains silent in the face of Israeli practices to Judaize the city (11) of Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the White House did not interfere with the decision of the US Senate that considered Jerusalem as an eternal and united capital of the State of Israel.

In addition to all of this, we have James Baker's formula as put forward in May 1989. The Secretary of State, addressing the leaders of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), demanded Israel relinquish its dream of greater Israel and its claim to hold on to the Occupied Territories. He also added that Israel must reach out to the Palestinians. By contrast, the "implementation" of this "declared" policy involved the suspension of dialogue with the PLO following the incident of Abu el-Abbas on a Tel Aviv beach on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June 1990. Another example of such contradiction was Baker's five-point plan of October 1989 to push forward the peace process. No "implementation" has taken place because the US Secretary lost interest after Israel's rejection and obduracy. However, he left Israel his phone number to call him when it was willing and/or interested.

Is there any reason to believe the US will act any differently with regard to its latest initiative? On 6<sup>th</sup> February 1991, James Baker put forward his new five-point plan in which he called for the resumption of the peace process between Israel and its Arab neighbors and between Israel and the Palestinians. This

declaration was reaffirmed by President Bush in his address to a Joint session of the House and Senate on 6th March 1991. President Bush called for a comprehensive solution grounded in UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338; the principle of land for peace ; and the security and recognition of the state of Israel, at the same time that the Palestinian legitimate political rights be guaranteed. He also called for an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

### B-The European Community (EC)

The EC's desire and initiatives to find a political and just solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine issue go back to the early 70s.

The EC positions were ahead of those of the rest of the world community. The EC initiatives were based on principles in line with its mutual and common interests with the Arab area and with Israel. They were also in harmony with the developments, events, attitudes and moves of decision-makers at regional and international levels. The EC has been careful, through its initiatives, to express its role and position as an independent power on the international arena. At the same time, each European capital expressed its freedom and independent views in adopting the mechanism it deems fit to implement the broad lines of a European Middle East policy, the European-Arab policy and the European-Israeli policy.

The European initiatives were based on the principles of implementation of resolutions 242 and 338, the need to end Israeli occupation of Arab territories, and the recognition that a just and lasting peace should take into consideration Palestinian legitimate rights (statement of the European Foreign Ministers, November 6, 1973)(12)

In 1974 West Germany was the first EC country to recognize the principle of self-determination for the Palestinians. Its leaders were among the first European officials to meet with the PLO leaders. In 1974, Yasir Arafat met, in Geneva, the former West German chancellor Willy Brandt and the Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky in their capacity as representatives of the Socialist International. The German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt confirmed West Germany's support of self-determination for the Palestinians 1981 (13)

The EC reaffirmed its positions toward the Middle East issues and the Palestinian question in various statements, particularly the Venice Declaration of June 13 1981. On February 23, 1987, the EC issued a statement which reiterated its support for an international peace conference to be held under the auspices of the UN with the participation of the parties concerned. The EC has also welcomed the acceptance by the PNC of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 as a basis for an international conference, which implies acceptance of the right of existence and security of all states of the region, including Israel (Declaration by the EC on 21 November, 1988). The EC welcomed the Israeli government proposal of May 14, 1989 for elections in the Occupied Territories The Europeans viewed elections as a contribution to the peace process, part of a procedure towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the conflict. Their position has been that the elections should include East Jerusalem under adequate guarantees of freedom. No solution should be excluded and the final negotiations should take place on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, based on the formula of "land for peace" (The Madrid Declaration on 27 June 1989).

In the context of these comprehensive views on the conflict in the region, the EC called upon the Arab countries to establish normal relations of peace and cooperation with Israel. In return, it asked Israel to recognize the right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination (The Madrid Declaration on 27 June, 1989).

Since the beginning of the Palestinian Intifada in December 1987, individual capitals of the EC states have expressed sympathy and solidarity with Palestinian demands and rights. Even those most cautious in expressing their attitudes, such as Britain, moved to record, on more than one occasion, their support

for the Palestinians. On May 2, 1989 the French President Francois Mitterand received Yasir Arafat at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

All this indicated an improvement in relations. In the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, this process has regressed. The EC and the European leaders have found themselves in a complex situation and faced with more than one test for the "declaration" of priorities as to their interests and relations.

As regards US- European relations, Europeans need to answer one question: To what extent can European policy maintain its independence, to say nothing about its role as a partner in the international equation, and avoid the role of a mere of Washington in the light of Washington's decision, right from the outset of the crisis, to bear the full extent of international responsibility and to take the lead in demanding an unconditional surrender by Iraq ?

Europe has had to choose between two trends or to link them. The first is the trend set by the position of Britain, the second by France.

Britain enthusiastically followed the US position throughout the Gulf Crisis. It called for strong measures, not only with the aim of implementing UN Security Council resolutions calling for a total embargo on Iraq, but also to punish Iraq and its leadership for raping" Kuwait which had been under British protection not long

France, on the other hand, adopted a more independent stance perhaps in part due to the legacy of General Charles de Gaulle who believed it was part of France's destiny to develop a special relationship with the Arab world. (14) Moreover, France's position is influenced by its proximity and close relationship with its neighbors in the Arab Maghreb, the majority were opposed to the war in the Gulf. Furthermore, besides the influence of about 4 million North Africans living in France, Iraq was foremost among the Arab countries in trading with France, especially in purchasing arms (15)

Between these two trends, the EC found itself facing a new threat: that the UN might become a "tool" for serving US interests. The EC was surprised by the unexpected structure of the coalition and the divided Arab world, represented by the Damascus-Cairo-Riyadh and Sana-Khartum-Amman axes. In between the 2 were the Palestinian people, and leadership both inside and outside the Occupied Territories and outside. This division came at a time when the EC had been keen on enhancing Western-Islamic and European-Arab relations.

Finally, one must bear in mind that the EC has a special relationship with Israel and with American and European Jews with their traditionally strong influence in the economy, finance and media. This special relationship is represented in the balance of trade: the EC buys about 30% of the total Israeli exports and it provides Israel with about 50% of its total imports (16)

In the interval between the beginning of the Gulf Crisis and the outbreak of the war, France, Italy and Spain tried to find a political solution to end the crisis. They issued a statement during their summit meeting between 15-18 December 1990 that A "guarantees that Iraq would not be attacked if it withdrew from Kuwait". But the idea receded as President George Bush warned of the need to maintain a "fixed" and united European position within the coalition led by Washington (17)

As for the Palestinian issue, the EC continued to adhere to its previous positions. It reaffirmed the call for an international conference and for backing the efforts of the UN Secretary General to protect the Palestinians. The EC promised to double its aid to the Palestinian people by financing development projects in the Occupied Territories, raising financial support to \$13 million in 1992 (18)

In another European initiative, the Foreign Ministers of the "Troika" (Holland, Luxemburg and Italy) announced their full support for Moscow's search for a political solution and urged the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. The "Troika" considered Iraq's initiative on February 15, 1991, which was rejected

outright by Washington, as "positive and important" (19). France (Francois Mitterand) kept seeking the formulation of an independent and balanced stand until a few hours before the outbreak of war. On 24 September 1990, the French President, in his address to the UN, called for "the democratic option for the future of Kuwait". He added that all the countries in the region should "respect the minimum of human rights". And he called for an international conference to solve all the problems of the region (20).

In a third attempt, France and Germany accepted, and Italy supported, Soviet President Gorbachev's plan on 22 February 1991, that "Iraq will comply with Security Council resolution 660 and will begin withdrawing" (from Kuwait). The French Prime Minister Michel Rocard declared that Moscow's Plan "meets the conditions for peace in the region". The former Algerian President Ahmad bin-Bella revealed that he personally was pursuing French-Iraqi negotiations in Geneva and that the basis of the announced Soviet Plan was the agreement of the two sides in Geneva. But

Washington disregarded the Soviet Plan. Iraq rejected the last minute French initiative for "withdrawal in return for convening an international conference". Thus the military option became inevitable. (21)

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the EC continued to work as an independent party in the political equation. It wanted to show that it was still capable of taking independent initiatives, parallel to the U.S. position, but not necessarily contradicting it. This has been despite differences over procedural details that sometimes surface and make things appear as if there are contradictions and differences. These tensions point to two possible outcomes for Europe: pinning hopes on a greater European role or reducing the importance of the European role to the point of "contempt" to show that the "European statements" are no more than hollow ones.

The EC agreed with Washington's position as stated by President George Bush in his speech before Congress on March 6, 1991. It reiterated almost the same phrases in "asking Israel to give Cup land for peace". The "Troika" of EC Foreign Ministers repeated this stand in their statements during their visit to the area in early 1991(22)

What is noticeable, however, is the convergence of the European and American views in leveling sharp criticism against the PLO and Yasir Arafat's leadership. Early in February 1991, the EC decided "not to make any contacts at high levels with the PLO". Even Germany, which was among the first European countries to recognize and support Palestinian legitimate rights and whose leaders met with Yasir Arafat, stated after the war, through its Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Gensher, that, "the Palestinians Fare still an important party to the dialogue in the Middle East, but not necessarily the PLO" (23). Bush's statements to the Arab press on March 8, 1991 stressed this "criticism" by saying that "Arafat betted on the losing horse at the wrong time and in the wrong place". He added that there will be no dealings with the PLO leadership at this stage while emphasizing that "there are good people in it". Continuing this pattern of American-European criticism, US Secretary of State James Baker stated in Cairo on 11 March 1991 that the US had "suspended" dialogue with the PLO and that the PLO knows what is required of it in order to renew dialogue. The Italian Foreign Minister, Gianni de-Michelis, on the other hand, stated that Italy regarded the question of Palestinian representation as something that belongs to the Palestinian people. But he added: "We are waiting for Mr. Arafat to take a clear position after the Gulf crisis" (24).

Between the two positions, the one that "criticizes" the PLO leadership and does not seek to cooperate with it at the present time, and the second which calls for non-intervention in the issue of the political representation of the Palestinians while asking for "clarifications" if not the adoption of a new position, a third view has emerged in Europe. It calls for "something new in the new era". This was revealed in the statement of the Dutch Foreign Minister, Hans Von Brook, while addressing a group of Palestinians that met with the Troika in Jerusalem on March 7, 1991. He said: "The Palestinians cannot be denied the right to choose their leadership but they should realize that the matter will be complicated when they confine themselves to one choice" (25)

The European position departs from that of the US in identifying the mechanism for a political solution. The EC has continued to ask for an international conference for peace. France (Mitterand) sees the possibility of holding a number of international peace conferences on the Middle East. The Troika Ministers reiterated this position during their meetings with Palestinians in Jerusalem. The Foreign Minister of Luxembourg stated that "the EC has been calling for an international conference to be held under the auspices of the UN, for the past ten years". The French Prime Minister (Michel Rocard) reiterated this position during his meeting with Bush in the White House on March 10, 1991, but was careful not to leave the door open for different views on the role of his country. He added that "France is keen on cooperating and working together with the US to achieve a political solution ... and to provide the mechanism for Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and that France and America are two close allies" (26)

In the light of this, it can be said that the Europeans are cautious in pronouncing an independent European view. They are also careful about the contribution of Europe's role in the shaping of the New World Order and the New Regional Order.

The Europeans express their involvement in two directions. The first is in the direction of the political issue, reaffirming and holding to the declaration of basic principles regarding the Palestine issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The second direction is the economic issue, by expanding the volume and extent of financial and technological aid, as well as investments in the development of the Middle East.

The European role at this stage is that of a partner of the U.S. which is careful to play the politics of consent. Both will share in the formulation or even the implementation of the new equation and will be involved in forwarding ideas and agreeing on broad Clines and distribution of roles. This was emphasized by President Bush's statement following his meeting with the French Prime Minister on 10 March 1991. He said "France is a principal party and is of extreme significance and has special knowledge of and interests in the region".

A European "ally" could be strong or weak. And a European "partner" could be agreeable or disagreeable. But the importance of the "ally" or "partner" depends on their willingness to leave the other party free from commitments and obligations. Or they may leave the other party alone to draw up plans, make decisions and implement them.

The Palestinians, more than anyone else, are concerned that the Europeans maintain a strong role. They are interested in dealing directly with Europe. Hence their quick replies to questions coming from Italy, Spain and France. The Palestinians, moreover, continue to welcome the economic role of the EC. The PLO is expected to be lenient in its position when it stresses that the EC should comply with its recommendations. The Palestinians will "listen" more to European proposals. This often develops into an "understanding" or "acceptance" of some European ideas aimed at finding a new Palestinian equation. Such an equation would include the idea of a "homeland and state", or the willingness to play a role in the game of political maneuvering when facing the Israeli initiative for "elections" in the Occupied Territories. This means that Palestinians are not hiding behind such phrases as "rejection" but are accepting the challenge of wrestling with a policy that will not result in total loss for them or a full victory for their rights and needs.

Palestinians will maintain their contacts with Europe and intensify their meetings with European officials "inside" and "outside". This will restore confidence in these relations, not because of the importance of European-American relations at this stage, or for the hope that Europe will assume a major role in the current or future political scenario or, finally, out of a desire to obtain Economic and financial aid. What the Palestinians are trying to avoid is being left alone in the arena, without a friend or ally, and thus becoming an easy prey to others who are now more powerful.

While the European role is based on the political formula "land for peace" and the implementation of UN resolutions 242 and 338, the European capitals have varying positions as to how this policy should be achieved.

France, under President Francois Mitterrand, believes that the establishment of a homeland for the Palestinians should be part of the new world order in the Middle East. This can be achieved, according to France, through an international conference or a regional conference or a conference for security and economic cooperation in the Middle East, like the Helsinki Conference of 1975 in Europe. The ultimate goal is to bring the Palestinians and the Israelis to direct negotiations. The French stress their support for the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinians, as well as the need for an independent Palestinian role.

Italy and Spain share the French position regarding the establishment of a homeland or independent statehood for the Palestinians alongside Israel. A comprehensive political settlement, they believe, should be achieved through the UN, with the same Vigour that UN resolutions on the Gulf crisis were implemented statements by the Foreign Ministers of Italy and Spain in mid-March, 1991). The two countries do not want to get involved in the details and nature of Palestinian representation. However, they are awaiting "clarifications" from the PLO leadership and are perhaps eager to see a "new position" adopted by Yasir Arafat (27)

Holland, Luxemburg and Belgium have retreated from their previous support for the PLO and Yasir Arafat and are calling for another option. They have also displayed interest in proposals made by the Israeli Labour Party and the Shamir plan of May 15, 1989, which was re-endorsed by the Israeli government in March, 1991.

Britain has even gone further in its dealings with the PLO. It has joined the US in criticizing the PLO and urging it to "correct", not change, its policy, while showing interest in dealing directly with Palestinian leadership from the Occupied Territories. Britain has made no decision vis-a-vis an international conference. It is waiting for "suitable" circumstances and elements, depending on the latest developments in the Arab region.

Germany, once again, is involved in its past. On the one hand, it provided the US with financial and political aid during the Gulf crisis whilst on the other many Germans were condemning the Gulf war. Germany has again slipped into the "Guilt Complex" which has governed its behavior and decision-making since the end of World War II. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of Germany apparently have not released the country from this complex. The Germans share the British view of a "joint Arab delegation for negotiations". Such a delegation would include Palestinians together with Jordanians and/or Egyptians. The confederation thesis is given priority as the mechanism for an "International peace conference.

### **-The Soviet Union and Eastern European**

It is premature to judge the political role of the Soviet Union, in the light of the historical developments and "new thinking" in the Kremlin. While Soviet leaders are absorbed with their own internal crises and have therefore been absent from the international scene for some time, one must not under-estimate the political influence of Moscow.

Leaders in the US and the West want to see continued Soviet participation in the new power balance. President George Bush has officially admitted that the Soviet Union has "legitimate interests" in the Arab Gulf (28). France is also encouraging Moscow to participate while Germany, for its part, is maintaining that the new world order will become de facto only when the Soviet Union is given an equal part and role in discussions over international issues.

Most of the initiatives for "change" in the last years have come from the Soviet Union. The "detente" perspective, a kind of agreement on regional issues, has paved the way for relaxation in superpower relations, which has prevented confrontation between Moscow and Washington.

The new thinking in Moscow gives priority to the national interests of the Soviet Union as a state and a society. It moves away from raising and adhering to ideological slogans. The Soviet Union advocates dialogue with all parties and sees that settlement of regional conflicts is an important objective, to be achieved through the pursuit of a political path leading to a climate of peace and world stability (29).

A key result of the new thinking in the Soviet Union is that Soviet foreign policy displays a new style of independence, despite the fact that it has taken second place to the priorities of domestic policy. The flexibility of movement and the multiplicity of alternatives in Soviet foreign policy have been reflected in a more relaxed approach to Soviet involvement in international affairs, giving it more choice as to whether or not to take up certain issues.

In the Middle East, the Soviet Union has improved its relations with Turkey and Iran. It has begun to establish diplomatic relations with the Arab Gulf states, including Saudi Arabia (30). It has resumed its contacts and dialogue with Egypt and Libya and seriously renewed relations with Jordan without drastically disturbing its traditional relations with Syria and Iraq. The Soviet Union began to talk to the Palestinians and Arabs about the need to reach a political solution to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict. It asked the Palestinians to take the initiative of recognizing the state of Israel and negotiating with it as a breakthrough to achieve "victory" for the Palestinian Intifada and to speed up the process of a comprehensive political solution through an international conference, attended by all parties concerned, to be held within the framework of Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

On the other hand, the Soviet Union opened the gates for emigration of Soviet Jews and reopened the channels of contact with Israel. Meetings were held between the Foreign Ministers of the two states. Israeli officials visited Moscow and diplomatic relations at consular level were established. Moscow also lifted restrictions imposed on the channels of communication between the Soviet Jews living in Israel and those who remained in the Soviet Union. The "revival" of relations between the countries, and the citizens thereof, especially when there is a religious and cultural connection, will create interests in both directions. Israel is no longer talking about its fear of Moscow and Soviet diplomacy. Soviet immigrants have regained their confidence in their other land. It has revived projects and ideas for continuing human, cultural and even political relationships; and expanded the sphere of mutual influence, as well as the competition and contrast between the relationship of US Jews with Israel and the relationship of the Jews in and outside Israel with the Soviet Union.

Some Palestinian and Arab circles considered the results of the new thinking in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a serious challenge to Arab and Palestinian interests and as a departure from the fixed traditional attitudes and automatic support they had known from a strong ally over the years. The Soviet Union and most East European countries severed diplomatic ties with Israel in the wake of the June 1967 war. But they had not rescinded their recognition of it. Many communist parties in the Arab World began to look for a new frame and title for their party organizations. The Palestinian Communist Party declared (Sulaiman Najjab on January 31, 1990) the Party's decision to abandon Marxist ideology due to internal considerations as well as the changes and policies that have taken place in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

Other Palestinians and Arab circles considered the new thinking as an opportunity for Palestinians and Arabs to come to grips with the challenges of the 90s: "they cannot ask for fixed policies in a changing world". They are not entitled to demand that the Soviet Union and East European countries do not resume diplomatic relations with Israel. This is so because they themselves declare their acceptance of Israel's existence and call upon Israel to negotiate with them, as shown in numerous resolutions taken by Arab and Palestinian meetings starting with the Fez Summit in 1982 and ending with the 1988 Intifada Summit in Algeria.

Despite the attitude of these two groups, those who criticize, and those who consent to and understand the new thinking, the Palestinians and Arabs are moving to intensify "dialogue" with the Kremlin, to explain the uniqueness and the dangerous dimensions of Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel (31). In other

words, the Palestinians and the Arabs have to deal with the new thinking in the Soviet Union in order to remove the threat to their present and future, and not to create a void.

One of the most serious issues for the Palestinians has been Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel. The Palestinian position, in the light of the new thinking in the Soviet Union, has been based on "dialogue". First, the Palestinians have said that they are not opposed to a person's right to return to or leave his country. This is an absolute right, which must also include the Palestinians. Second, they are not against opening the gates for the emigration of Soviet Jews or others. But this emigration should be organized and reciprocated as other countries follow suit. The emigres should be given the right to choose their destination and not led to a specific place. Third, the Palestinians are demanding that the Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel should not be at the expense of Palestinian rights and interests. These include residence, work and mutual resources. Fourth, the Palestinians are strongly opposed to the settlement of Soviet Jews on the land of Intifada, East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These are Occupied Palestinian Territories, and the international community, through the UN and Security Council, have rejected Israeli attempts to change the status of these territories.

Moscow has welcomed the Palestinian and Arab statements and continued the official and popular dialogue. It has asserted its support for the political and legitimate rights of the Palestinians under the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative. It has also supported the call for an international conference to be attended by the PLO on an equal footing with the other concerned parties. Moscow has seen to it that the PLO remain informed about its political initiatives in international affairs, especially in the Gulf Crisis. It also coordinated with the PLO leadership at all stages in the exchange of information and in negotiations. The PLO welcomed this formula of relations and considered it as a natural extension of its alliance relationship with the Soviet Union.

This is why the Soviet Union has not criticized the PLO or demanded explanations for what it did as some countries have done since the Gulf War. Palestinian circles expect the Soviet Union to maintain its role in the post-Gulf war era and to insist that the APLO leadership be a party to and a full and independent partner in the proposed political equation. It continues to consult and coordinate with the PLO. It would also use dialogue to convince Both parties of the impossibility of bypassing, or dropping the, or even of dealing with an alternative to it.

The burden and responsibility of renewing relations with Eastern Europe and the renewal of the "tools, faces, and lines" of communication are awaiting a quick Palestinian initiative before it is too late.

#### D-Israel

Since the end of 1987 (9 December), almost four years prior to the eruption of the Gulf Crisis, the Palestinian Intifada has succeeded in reimposing the Palestinian problem on the everyday political agenda in Israel. In addition, the Intifada has also succeeded in drawing the attention and sympathy of public opinion in many countries. The Intifada's message has been, and still is, that Palestinian struggle does not aim at destroying Israel. Rather, it aims at ending Israeli occupation and at achieving Palestinian freedom and independence in a state alongside that of Israel.

However, Israel remains unable to respond to the Intifada's message positively. The question remains: How can the Palestinian issue be solved? Israel is a divided society. Its social, ethnic, religious, cultural and economic structure is complicated and contradictory. It lacks harmony in its priorities and aims. There are wide gaps separating the parties of the political establishment. The problem in Israel is not a formal or organizational one, i.e. the election system, the function of the Knesset or the formation of a government. It is a problem of substance lying in the nature and borders of the Hebrew state. What type of Israel is wanted, a pure Jewish state or a state open to others? A state within the borders of 1947, or 1949, or 1967, or a state comprising the two banks of the River Jordan? The latest opinion poll in Israel explains the wide gap that separates the base from the leadership. It also explains the reason for the lack of confidence between the two sides. About 80% of the electorate in Israel express their reluctance to give

any concrete advantage to any of the two major parties (Labor and Likud) over the other. This is one way of showing lack of confidence in the ability of either party to perform the task completely. It also reflects the fear of the Israelis that one party or the other may retreat and give concessions under certain circumstances. Israeli society has been, and still is, unable to be "politically decisive" as far as the Palestinian issue is concerned (32)

This impotence reflects itself in the multiplicity of widely differing suggestions made by the Israeli political and intellectual elite regarding plans, formulas and equations for the solution of the Palestinian issue. The pivotal question of all these plans is: should the "territories" be kept at whatever cost or should the issue be solved, even by giving up most of the territories?

For the first time in the history of Israel's political crisis, a coalition government consisting of the two major parties fell not because of a religious, economic or personal dispute, but because of its incapacity to deal with the Intifada and the questions of how and when Israel should start talking to the Palestinians and of which solution it wants.

Israel is led by two political parties, which have sharp ideological, philosophical and historical differences. Both have hawks among their ranks and elements from the right, left and center. These two parties have not changed their platforms since the establishment of the state of Israel.

The Labour party (Ma'arach) accepted the 1947 partition of the "Palestinian Land". Ben Gurion and Moshe Shatret led the party to a dialogue with the Arabs and an understanding with Jordan on the Palestinian issue. According to this understanding, Israel would not object to the "unification" of the West Bank to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (33)

The Likud party, on the other hand, has not only called for the entire "Palestinian Land", but it has called for expanding Israel to include the East Bank of the Jordan River. Jabotinsky and Menahem Begin led the party in fighting the Arabs and "dissolving" the Palestinians in the Arab states and outside Israel.

Today, the Labour party, under Shimon Peres and Itzhak Rabin, has announced that it is ready to give up territory to the other side. It also supports a referendum on the principle of "Land for Peace". Labour is seeking a dialogue with the Arabs and "international participation" in the negotiations. It wants to achieve an understanding with Jordan on the Palestinian issue according to which there would be a confederation or federation between the West Bank and East Bank, but no third state would be established. Peres and Rabin are stressing the time factor, saying that Israel has only one year, as 1992 is an election year in Israel and the US. There are two schools of thought in the Labour party. The first is led by Haim Ramon and Yossi Beilin with five other members. The second is led by Moshe Shahal. The first calls for granting the Palestinians the right to self-determination on condition that the Palestinians and the Arab states recognize Israel and its right to exist in peace and security. The second calls for an independent Palestinian state or entity linked to Jordan through a confederation. It also believes that some concessions must be made but there is no leadership capable of dealing with this issue (34).

The present Likud-led government is one of the most radical governments in the history of Israel. It represents the half of the Israeli people which prefers to control the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Led by Yitzhak Shamir and Moshe Arens, the Likud is committed to the ideological and religious bases of the Israeli Bright-wing, namely, Greater Israel, including Judea, Samaria and Gaza. The Likud platform calls for unconditional negotiations with the Arab states. Its peace plan of May 14, 1989 calls for "mutual recognition between the states" and acknowledges the "rights of a minority" to a "narrow autonomy that applies only to the people and not the land".

There are other voices in the Likud which offer various suggestions. David Levy, for example, calls for including Israel in the "joint security arrangements" between the eight Arab countries (The Gulf States, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria). He is not against allowing UN observers to supervise the elections for the Palestinians. Ariel Sharon advocates the idea of a Palestinian state in Jordan. Yitzhak Modai, a liberal, is

inconsistent and is shaken by the ideas of each trend. Dan Meridor, the Minister of Justice, says that the "time is fit" for dramatic changes. He believes there is an opportunity now to talk with the "Arabs in the territories" and is urging his government to make an effort to bring the "Arabs of Judea, Samaria and Gaza" to the negotiation table with Israel in order to reach an interim agreement and not a "final solution" (35)

Outside the two major parties there are the schools of thought of the Peace Now Movement. Uri Avneri calls for the establishment of a "Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip". This is the only solution, he says, and warns of an "Arab-Islamic volcano that would turn the region into hell" (36)

And from outside Israel there is the advice of Henry Kissinger (former US Secretary of State), who calls on Israel to avoid "nightmares" and to find a compromise. He warns of the dangers of two options: first, if Israel insists on maintaining every inch of the Occupied Territories, it will face a similar situation to that of South Africa, isolated and boycotted by the UN; second, if Israel gives up all of the Occupied Territories, it will risk becoming like Lebanon and finding itself under siege. Kissinger sees the way out through a compromise between these two options, and that this is the best time to do so, because "the enemy has been defeated, and the moderate countries have won over the radical doves" (37).

But the Israeli government understands the "time element" in a different way. Time is not an opportunity that should be exploited. Rather, it is something that can be used not to undertake anything but to wait for a "change" in the political equation. Thus it can avoid making any commitment or decision in anticipation that the change would come from the other side. The government also hopes that with time, differences and splits would emerge on the Other side. Meanwhile, the Israeli government continues to carry out its policy of creating a de facto situation and a new reality by building settlements or expanding those already existing. While Israel has been able to "delay" a solution over the past four years, now it will not be able to pursue this policy. Changes have occurred in all directions. Now the door is open for Israel to enter the home of the Arab Middle East through the Palestinian issue in all its components: land, people, rights and legitimate representation. Otherwise, it will remain a divided country of "nightmares", afraid of the future. It will remain incapable of moving from its fear to a solution compatible with an era where the theory of secure borders has collapsed and thus will become a new South Africa.

### **E-The Arab Countries**

The old problem of the Arab world is the ongoing phenomenon of divisions and differences between the various Arab governments. Even when there is minimal understanding on a certain issue, it is lost when officials are removed from positions of responsibility, or with a change in the balance of power in the area. The Gulf War has revealed more than ever these divisions.

Some sided with the allies against Iraq and deployed their troops in the Gulf. Others opted for solidarity with the people of Iraq against the war, and sent medicine and food to Iraq. Between these two groups, the Arab people expressed rejection of the return of foreign forces to "occupy" Arab land. Meanwhile, Arabs everywhere watched helplessly as the option of the "Arab solution" to the Gulf Crisis receded in the face of the advancing "foreign solution". The boundaries of the Arab region thus expanded with the "return" of Iran and Turkey. Iran returned via the "Islamic awakening" and the advance of its geographic borders toward the Gulf and Iraq. Turkey's return came through its "water interest" and its borders with Syria and Iraq. Thus, the Palestine issue receded in the face of the advancing regional geopolitical and security issues.

The "veil" that concealed the face of Arab society in the Arab Gulf states and Saudi Arabia has dropped. The presence of more than half a million US and Western troops on Arab land will not be without its consequences, if not immediate then in the longer term. These consequences will not be confined to the Gulf region, but will extend to the whole Arab homeland.

It might not be an exaggeration to say that, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the "Arab house" faces a choice. One alternative may be that of a new awakening, not yet clearly defined, but still going through a gray phase carrying with it a lot of wounds, pains and casualties. This "new awakening" will not be completed before the region has settled down in preparation for reconciliation and the healing of wounds that opened up in the aftermath of the war. To overcome this ordeal the institutions of the Arab "house" must be reorganized on modern bases, the most important of which are national institutions and joint Pan-Arab institutions so as to create harmony between the North and South, and between the haves and have-nots. The second alternative is to continue with the Arab regional conflicts: between Iraq on the one hand and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia on the other, between the Kuwaitis and Palestinians, the Syrians and Palestinians, the Lebanese and Palestinians, the Iraqis and Egyptians, the Saudis and the Jordanians, the Libyans and the Sudanese, the Moroccans and the Libyans, etc.

The Arab Gulf states, Kuwait in particular, may, in the foreseeable future, withdraw from their engagement in the Palestinian issue. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria will step in to invest in the Palestinian issue, in order to continue to reap the fruits of the "Desert Storm" in the Gulf. The Arab Maghrib states will continue their previous solidarity with the Palestinians. The present and future of Jordan will remain associated with the Palestinian issue. In the midst of all this, Arab awareness dwindles. Syria may follow Egypt in normalizing relations with Israel. Regional economic and security formations may emerge. But they will be void of any overall nationalistic substance or Palestinian National presence. The Arab region will revert back to square one to await the surprises that the unknown holds for it.

#### 4)The Palestine File

The Palestinians are in agreement with others that, in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the world has entered a new era. While the international and regional political map is witnessing upheavals and changes in its situations and relations they see that the Palestinian Question (the land, the people, the rights and leadership) constitutes the main link in a chain of Middle East issues and that it tops the political agenda of many regional and "international political forces.

The Palestinians are also of one opinion that, after the Gulf War, the Palestinian Question itself has entered a new era of challenges on three fronts simultaneously: the Israel Front, the Arab Front and the inter-Palestinian Front.

#### **A-The challenges of the Israeli Front**

The policy of the right-wing Israeli government is based on the notion of exploiting the time-factor for as long as possible, on creating a new status quo (immigration, absorption and settlement), on new alternatives resulting from a change in the regional political powers, on the withdrawal of Arab support for the Palestinians, or the fall of the Palestinian leadership, alongside the economic subjugation of the Palestinians on the inside. With the passage of time, Israel hopes to close the door on international solutions to the Israeli-Arab-Palestinian conflict. Israel is conducting its policy on two levels: towards the Arab states and towards the Palestinians (38)

The Israel: policy towards the Arab states is based on the philosophy of dividing the Arab world through four schemes:

- 1) Dividing the Arab countries into two or more camps and dealing with each bloc at the expense of the other, or dealing with each Arab country individually to normalize relations between them in the same way as it did with Egypt after Camp David. It follows then that the concerned Arab bloc or country is removed from the sphere of the conflict if not entirely neutralized.

- 2) Dissociating the Arab countries from the Palestinians and their historical legitimate leadership. This would open the door to an "Arab alternative" or a "Palestinian alternative" attached to an Arab country, or

a reversal of Arab acceptance of the Palestinian right to self-determination, and the imposition of Arab states' solution.

3) Dividing the PLO from within. Thus national consensus would vanish and the door would be open for competition, political rivalry and factionalism, pluralism claims of representation, and dealing with narrow, limited and marginal interests outside the Palestinian land.

4) Divorcing the Palestinian "Inside" from the Palestinian "Outside". The Palestinian issue would thus be transformed from the cause of land, people, rights and legitimate leadership, to the "rights of a minority" to which a narrow self-government that involves the people but not the land will be granted.

On the Palestinian local level, the Israeli government has failed to crush the Intifada militarily. Israeli generals and leaders concede that the Intifada is not a "war", but a deeply rooted popular movement with national aspirations. Despite the heavy casualties inflicted on it (about a thousand dead, more than 75,000 detainees, hundreds of deportees, demolished homes, and the confiscation of property and land) the Intifada continues. Having failed in its military effort, the Israeli government embarked on the policy of undermining the Intifada in four simultaneous stages:

1) Turning the West Bank and Gaza Strip into Palestinian ghettos by segregating them geographically and demographically. This was affected by long-term curfews (more than 33 consecutive days), the closure of towns, villages and camps and the positioning of "border" posts among them to restrict communication and travel. Jerusalem was also isolated. "Separation" between the land of the Intifada and Israel proper was implemented according to Israel's schedule and timing. Palestinian workers (about 50,000) were barred from Israel. "Green Cards" were forced on others (20,000) and new laws prohibit single people from leaving the Occupied Territories. These restrictions constrained Palestinians to worry about their social and economic condition within the confines of their own town, village or camp;

2) Imposing a total local and international news and media black-out on the conditions and changes in the land of the Intifada. It could be Henry Kissinger's advice in a new form: "Do what is to be done, but don't let anybody know". By doing so, the occupying force will be free to practice its suppression after the style of South Africa. Everything is done without witnesses or observers and in the absence of world public opinion. Consequently; "human sympathy" with the Palestinian National struggle has receded;

3) Continued closure of public and national institutions, such as universities, research and cultural centers, trade unions, societies and national committees. Other institutions were emptied of their national substance. Gradually the infrastructure of the Palestinian society has been destroyed. Thus national momentum is reduced to a minimum in order to create a vacuum to be filled with immigrants and settlers. Settlements were established and expanded in preparation for "Judaizing" the land. The statements of Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Housing Minister, revealed a plan to build 13,000 new housing units in the Occupied Territories over the next two years. The US State Department's annual report on settlements, issued in late March 1991, revealed an annual increase of 10% in the size of the 200 settlements in the West Bank. The number of settlers has reached 200,000, that is, 13% of the total population of the occupied West Bank (39)

4) Reviving the role of the institutions attached to the occupying force, such as the municipalities, or the economic and commercial sectors. These would be granted "licenses" to start economic and financial projects, which they would be concerned to maintain. It follows that they would become "tools" in the hands of the occupying force. They would operate under the slogan of "salvaging whatever can be salvaged". Israel would then deal with them as an alternative leadership.

### **B-The Challenges on the Arab Front**

The Palestinians were, and still are, part of the "Arab House", living its crises, fighting its battles and struggling for its unity, out of faith, conviction and experience that in Arab unity lies the strength and

victory of the Palestinians. The Palestinians can neither afford to be detached from their national roots, nor can they afford to withdraw from their position in the "Arab house". On the other side of the Arab-Palestinian relationship, the Palestinians are keen on preserving their own character, represented in the history of their struggle to achieve self-determination, freedom and independence like the rest of the Arab peoples. Hence, they would not accept "guardianship" over their interests. They resist interference in the independence of their decisions and in the political representation of their historical legitimate leadership. The Gulf crisis and the consequences of "Desert Storm" war put this precarious relationship to the test.

The State of Kuwait has declared its "withdrawal" from the Palestinian issue. It forced Palestinians into a third "exodus", and opened up a deep wound in the human relationship between the Kuwaiti and Palestinian people within the "Arab house". The ominous challenge lies not in its ending the direct material support of some Palestinian institutions in the Occupied Territories or in its withdrawing of the material, moral and political support for the PLO under Yasir Arafat, but in turning the relationship between the two peoples into one of bloodshed, destruction of life and annihilation of the Palestinian presence by threatening the future of about 400,000 Palestinians in Kuwait.

As for Syria, where some 300,000 Palestinians live distributed among ten refugee camps, Damascus has nurtured Palestinian "dissension". It is reserved in its dealings with the PLO and Yasir Arafat's leadership. Syria is also trying to eject PLO forces from Lebanon. It joined the allies against Iraq and played a leading role among the eight states (Gulf States, Egypt and Syria) in devising the "Damascus Accord" for economic, political and security cooperation. Israel, on the other hand, is using the media to seek the normalization of relations with Damascus after the Egyptian model in Camp David. Therefore, Damascus is expected to revive its relationship with the dissidents in the Occupied Territories at the same time as it is changing its relationship with the Palestinians "Outside" through the setting free about 400 Fatah prisoners from Syrian prisons. Its aim is to strengthen its influence over the Intifada and weaken Yasir Arafat's leadership.

Egypt acts as an open clearinghouse for methods of solving the Middle East conflict. Cairo seems willing to discount any option at the moment. Despite official reservation in Cairo's relationship with the PLO and Arafat's leadership, Egypt still deals with members of the Executive Committee (Jamal al-Surani at the Arab Foreign Ministers meeting) and former senior members and advisers in the PLO. At the same time, the Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv is active in dealing with many institutions and personalities in the Occupied Territories. Cairo's policy is in agreement with Riyadh and Washington concerning the "new ideas" to formulate the Palestinian representation and role. It coordinates its efforts with Damascus for the convening of a regional conference for security and development. It is also waiting for a Jordanian approach to Cairo for the re-opening of channels of communication with Riyadh, if not with Washington. However, this complicated and interwoven Egyptian political equation may be totally stalled or reversed if the Egyptian "street", or the Islamic opposition, expresses opposition to particular policies.

As to Jordan, the consequences of the Gulf war imposed new "challenges" on Palestinian-Jordanian relations (40). The Palestinian issue constitutes the backbone of the Jordanian policy. Internally, it affects security and stability in Jordan, and externally it affects Jordan's regional and international relations (41). These challenges involve two levels; first Jordanian and second Israeli.

On the first level, the problem has three dimensions. The first has to do with the latest Palestinian population group that is now entering Jordanian society in addition to the previous groups. The first group arrived between 1948 and 1967 and became part of Jordanian society and state (42). The second group entered Jordan between 1967 and 1987, became part of the internal political opposition and represented the strategic depth of relations with the Occupied Territories. The third group is an amalgamation of these two previous groups extending from 1948 to 1988, which remained confined to the refugee camps. The new fourth group comes from Kuwait and the Gulf States, and may equal in number the first group that entered in 1948, i.e. 250,000-300,000. The first aspect of this fateful problem is that it is not in the Palestinian interest, that this fourth group of Palestinians should be permanently settled in Jordanian territory. Jordan's interest also dictates that they should not take on a Jordanian identity as happened with some Palestinian population groups in the past. Instead, it is necessary to direct Palestinian aspirations

towards a Palestinian National Homeland and an Independent State on Palestinian soil. In addition, the economic and social conditions in Jordan cannot shoulder the burden of their "transient presence" in Jordan. Jordan may find limited and interim solutions to this new situation. It may grant loans and aid to help employ Palestinian skills and expertise in the Jordanian economy, as a temporary dressing for their wounds in order to protect the social and political climate in Jordan. Or it may even encourage a limited number of Palestinians to emigrate to Canada, Australia, USA and Europe. But the basic problem remains unsolved and temporary or emergency conditions may be perpetuated.

The second aspect of the problem lies in the differing priorities of the Jordanian and Palestinian sides. This is reflected on the present and future of the Occupied Territories. In view of Jordan's disengagement decision on 31 July 1988, the economic, financial and demographic pressures on the country, and the lack of any offer by Arab countries or international political powers of an independent role for Jordan or the PLO, Jordan may consider itself compelled to continue the suspension of its joint political move with the PLO. Therefore it may consider joining the new alliance structure in the region. It may do this either through Damascus, Cairo or Washington. By doing so, Jordan would prepare the appropriate regional ground for internal security and stability first, then for joint action with the Palestinians and their legitimate representatives, or for a joint Arab move (Amman, Cairo, Damascus, Riyadh). Palestinian-Jordanian relations therefore may revert to previous tensions or even clashes.

The third aspect of the problem lies in the role of the "Islamic Reawakening" in the Jordanian arena. This is coupled with the absence of a "moderate" leadership that balances the aspirations of the people with the resources available to meet them. During unemployment, and the difficult economic, social and demographic crisis in Jordan, the door may well be open to conflicts. This in turn will further complicate things in Jordanian society, and impair Jordan's political relations with the outside world. Thus the Kingdom's flexibility may be weakened and its current political strategies may be stalled.

The Israelis are also contributing to the dilemmas confronting Jordan. The extreme Israeli right continues to call for a "New Palestine" on Jordanian soil. This call is justified by the human and historic connections between the Jordanian and Palestinian peoples with attention drawn to the high percentage of Palestinians living in Jordan. It is also being justified by Israel's claim that the border with Jordan is "weak" and allows for "Resistance crossings". So, Israel would move to occupy the Jordan Valley and establish a "Security Zone" similar to the one it established in South Lebanon. This Zone would then be used to "undermine" Jordan's stability, if not preparing it for the "Transfer" policy advocated by the Israeli right, despite voices raised in the U.S. and Europe against such a move.

The second part of the Israeli challenge is represented by the continued adherence of the Israeli Labor party to the so-called "Jordanian option" for a political solution to the Palestine issue. Jordan has continuously held that it will not be an "alternative" to the Palestinians or to their sole legitimate representative in any talks or negotiations. Such a position is based on real Jordanian interests, and on a deep conviction of the impossibility of behaving otherwise. Yet Jordan may find itself in the midst of worsening internal problems, and almost daily Israeli pressure, in addition to the emergence of a regional axis (The Eight States), US pressure, and European and Soviet non-interference. All of this might drive Jordan into working out a new formula for its relations with the Palestinians and their sole legitimate leadership. There may be no immediate changes to the nature of the current relationship, but new formula may well lead to that.

#### Challenges on the Internal Front (Within the Palestinian House)

The Palestinians are reassessing and reviewing both their performance during the Gulf war and their current position. There may be formal differences over the order of priorities and the severity of the threat to the achievements, interests and needs of the Palestinians both inside and outside the Occupied Territories, but there are no substantial differences over the content and nature of the challenges faced. Moreover, Palestinian consensus still stresses the need to jointly share the burdens and responsibilities without the exception of anyone in any position. This stems from the commitment to national duty, and from awareness of the gravity of the next stage, rather than from any fear of the future. It also reflects the

conviction of the importance of unity and harmony within the Palestinian "house". It is also generally acknowledged that the "flaw" was not in the Palestinian performance but in presenting and explaining the position on the Israeli, regional and international fronts. For the sake of clarity these challenges can be divided into internal or domestic ones concerning the future of the Intifada, and "external" challenges that relate to the relation between the leadership "inside" and "outside".

## **I-The Intifada**

For the present and future of the Intifada, as a basic chapter in the national march towards freedom and independence on the national soil, the issues facing the Palestinians include: 1) the philosophy of the Intifada; 2) the tools of the Intifada; 3) the leadership of the Intifada.

### 1 -The Philosophy of the Intifada

The Intifada is a predominantly non-violent "white", popular and national movement. It seeks to change the status quo i.e. ending the authority and presence of the occupying Israeli force. and it works for building the new Palestinian society through the establishment of the power and nucleus of a Palestinian state on national soil. No one disputes this message. But four years into the Intifada, Palestinians are being challenged to re-examine this philosophy. Is it being displaced by actions on the ground that suggest it is no longer viable ? Or has it become a way of life for Palestinian society on the inside? For instance, in the wake of Rishon Litzion massacre on 20 May, 1990, was it still rational for the Palestinians to go on with their hunger strike at the Red Cross headquarters in Jerusalem after the U.S. veto against dispatching UN enquiry Commission and providing UN protection for them? Was it still possible to renounce or denounce armed action against Israel at a time when Israel was still suppressing and killing Palestinians in the villages and camps? In the wake of the murderous crime at al-Aqsa Mosque on 8 October 1990, was it still possible to avert confronting the Israelis with knives or to escalate confrontation to involve firearms in some villages and camps? Was it still possible to overlook these horrible events and continue with the non-violent approach, on the assumption that the blood spilt is something of an individual, transient and abrupt tax, and a natural result of the "heated" confrontation that will eventually calm down after the end of mourning on both sides? Or does it really mean that the philosophy of the Intifada is doomed to change, and that the Israeli escalation will make it imperative upon the Palestinians to resuscitate the armed struggle option and to mobilize the masses for it? Should this option be reactivated as a complementary tool on a limited scale without basically "changing" the philosophy of the Intifada, then the second option will have to do with the place and time. Will there be a mechanism as well as a geographic base for this option? Will it remain confined to the Occupied Territories?

### 2. The Tools of the Intifada

During the Intifada Palestinians have used the stone, the burning tire, the burning car, the closed shop, the partial strike, the general strike, graffiti, fax-correspondence, announcement of struggle plans in leaflets, political and information statements by National Institutions, a Palestinian day-light saving time that starts and ends on different dates from those of Israel, and whistling and the Kuffiyeh as pass-words. All these tools have been used to emphasize the Palestinian "specialty" to regain their natural position on the Palestinian soil and force the occupying power to retreat and withdraw. The challenges here involve three things. First, the Israelis have learnt how to cope with these tools by a combination of repression, "ghettoisation" of the Occupied Territories, restriction of media coverage and so forth. There is therefore a need to generate new forms of struggle. Secondly, some of the Palestinian methods of struggle have become tools for self-inflicted punishment instead of resisting occupation. This is how we might view the declaration of a general strike in the wake of long-term curfews imposed by the occupation. Such action may well result in effects on the community that are not in line with the aims of the Intifada. For example, there might even be deterioration in the performance of the social and economic infrastructure, which is supposed to be the solid cohesive base and the national depth that drives the Intifada. The economic and social conditions should not be allowed to degenerate into a mere additional burden on the Intifada that would impair the capability of its tools. This makes it imperative to the Intifada to change its tactics in order to protect its aims. The third challenge relates to the tools of education and awareness; the time

and place for using such tools, and the ability to ensure discipline, to criticize or even punish abusers and to deter those who would follow them blindly without the least consideration for the consequences of their acts.

### 3. The Intifada leadership

The formation of the "United National Leadership" in late December 1987, was seen as a new Palestinian attempt to set up a local leadership for the National movement in the O.T. It was also considered as a complementary arm of the sole legitimate leadership, the PLO. One of the most prominent characteristics of this new leadership was that it was not established on traditional or family lines. Nor was it a mere extension of former leaderships. The new leadership has sprung up from among young sectors of the community from various locations and trends. The new formation includes an intellectual leadership, a field leadership and Can information leadership. The leadership includes representation of the four factions: Fatah, the Popular Front, the Democratic Front and the Communists. However, its composition was not fixed. Moreover, its membership was kept secret making it impossible for the occupying authority to detect and eliminate them even when some elements were uncovered and removed either through murder, arrest or deportation. Any vacancy resulting from Israeli suppression was immediately filled with a new element or representative. The leadership continued functioning throughout. These rejuvenated successive leaderships succeeded in continuing to shoulder the responsibility of leading and directing the Palestinian "house" and so throughout the four years of the Intifada, people granted them confidence and support and responded to their appeals. Moreover, the leaderships won credibility and recognition by all.

But the challenges that these leaders encounter, at this stage, do not lie in the nature of their being structured on an organizational, "party" basis. The problem lies in the discharging of their role within the leadership and in the community. The UNL has become a local political and information institution that issues its decisions unanimously or by consensus agreement among the various elements. These decisions are supposed to meet the needs of the community. After functioning together for four years, the interests of the different organizations and factions have begun to reassert themselves. Their dealings with one another have become based on the "thought, position and interest" of the organization or faction, which commands their loyalty. This interest has, on some issues, taken precedence over the real public interest. Leadership members who are supposed to possess political awareness, national courage and the inclination to place the public interest before the factional one, have been unable to continue in their positions if they attempt to cast off the mantle of their faction or take a position incompatible with that of their faction. Such behavior has kept them in the role of a mere "representative", rather than as a responsible partner in the leadership.

Moreover, a leadership member, that acts as the envoy or representative of a faction, may deem it necessary to be "non-committal" on a decision taken by the majority. He usually does so in order to safeguard the interests of his faction in the Palestinian "street", or to embarrass or hinder other organizations. He may seek justifications for his opposition, arguing for the practice of democracy within the Palestinian "house", and that opposition is a healthy phenomenon. If opposition is not undertaken for its own sake, then the point of view it represents will constitute another option later on, when the decision of the majority has not yielded the "expected results".

Sometimes, a faction representative in the leadership may have built up over the years personal relations and self-interests. They become part of his thought and practice. This induces him sometimes to give them precedence over the faction or even public interest. Such things, can lead to fragmentation of the leadership and adverse consequences for community. The first signs of this are individual moves by some factions of the leadership. On occasions groups have taken, without prior coordination, political, informational or escalatory actions that sap the momentum of the joint national action. They thereby undermine its capability and effectiveness, and inadvertently may help other trends, the fundamentalists in particular, to take up the initiative.

The major danger of these actions lies in preparing the ground for either the occupying force to deal singly with each faction in various locations and eliminate its leadership, or it may drive one organization or faction to initiate a change in the structure of the leadership.

### **Relations between the "Inside" and the "Outside"**

This issue was, and still is, the most sensitive. It is not a matter for debate outside the Palestinian "house", on the assumption that it is an issue of national security. Open debate of the issue now may be justified not only for the purpose of self-criticism, but also to respond to Israeli pronouncements on the issue, which have become part of their psychological war against the Intifada, as well as to affirm maturity and political awareness, which are the protecting shield of national security. It might be said that there are seven problem areas relating to the nature and structure of the relationship between the leadership "outside" and that "inside". First of all is the plain fact that the main leadership is located outside. This weakens the interaction between the base and the leadership. The leadership abroad may vacillate in assessing, deciding or determining policy or action or else make no decision at all. The leadership "inside" may consider itself more informed of the conditions and their particulars, and consequently more capable of evaluating the immediate or future results. Besides, the leadership inside considers itself more keen on maintaining harmony among the elements of the leadership inside and on its future work. In addition, all the leadership of one faction, namely the Communist Party, is located inside. Hence, it enjoys flexibility and expediency or even the ability to take the initiative from the leadership on the outside. By doing this, it places the leadership "inside" in a contradictory position. Either it goes along with the rest of the inside leadership to formulate a local decision, or it will await a decision from the outside. In both cases, the outside leadership comes under pressure.

The second problem area reflects the absence of historical leaders (Abu Jihad, Abu Iyad and others) whose presence was credited with effecting unity "outside" and then "inside". Those leaders were able to realize against all odds national consensus. They were also the direct founders of the underground Intifada and involved in selecting its leadership. They had always commanded the respect and loyalty of the "inside". The challenge posed by their absence follows the ascent of this second generation of leaders outside. The majority of these new leaders are still unknown to the inside. Therefore, it may take some time to build bridges between the two sides, and to prove that the new leaders are capable of filling the vacuum. But the possibilities of either success or failure are still there. So, the alternative available to Yasir Arafat's leadership is to find a common denominator between the leadership of the inside and this new generation of leaders. Otherwise, the PLO will be strong "inside" and weak "outside". It follows then that, under the current circumstances, the political weight will be in favor of the "inside", something which may strain relations with the outside. The "outside" may also rush into political moves in more than one direction for many purposes, foremost among them its desire not to lose its central role. Such initiatives could undermine the general Palestinian position or the leadership itself.

The third factor concerns the inability to invest the Declaration of Independence with political substance. The leadership put off or suspended the implementation of the second part of it, that is, forming a national provisional government. With the absence of state laws and regulations, we continued to appeal to customs and traditions. Under the social changes created by the Intifada, and the rebellion it is leading against political and traditional conditions, locally and on an Arab level, together with the active soul-searching, coupled with the difference in age between the leaderships of the "Inside" and the "Outside", this may turn into an "accusation" which will evolve into rage and revolt. This will be the beginning of separation between the "Inside" and the "Outside" and this is one of the most serious challenges facing the national movement. It is also foremost among the aims which Israel seeks to achieve.

A fourth area of concern reflects the Palestinian "departure" from the Arab "house" due to the onset of regionalism. With the retreat from pan-Arabism and the political move of the eight members of the axis to manipulate the "dissidents" in Damascus, or the "functionaries" in Cairo, or the "opportunists" in Riyadh, or the "mongers" in Amman, or even the "fundamentalists" in most of these capitals, to build contacts with the "Inside" or to open "shops" for competition and rivalry first, then for participation on the soil of the

"Inside". All of these factors may beleaguer the inside and facilitate its penetration. It also weakens the leadership outside.

A fifth area of anxiety has arisen because of the recent deterioration in the international standing of the PLO. Actors on the international stage have opted for direct dealings with the leaderships and institutions of the inside, even though this was done with a "green light" or permission from outside. At the same time, the lack of interference or objection by Israel has helped, indeed, to highlight the role of the leadership of the inside. Local and international public opinion has thus been prepared to accept this as a prelude to "recognizing" it. This action further enhanced the strength of the inside in its dealings with the "outside". At the same time, it demanded from the "Inside" leadership a "test" of loyalty to the outside. As for the outside, it became skeptical and apprehensive that the rug might be pulled from underneath its feet.

A sixth problem has arisen owing to the loss of financial support from the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia which may severely impair the effectiveness of the PLO apparatus and plans. It might fail to meet the needs of the inside through its inability to raise enough funds to fulfill its obligations. This makes it imperative to reduce or drop appropriations. The list of priorities has to be rearranged for the inside and the outside, both of whom will be enfeebled.

Finally, the ideological and political differences among the four organizations are still a prominent trait of the structure and style of the leaderships inside and outside alike. The Communist Party entered the leadership after three months following the Intifada in 1987. The Fundamentalist leaderships ( Hamas and the Islamic Jihad) joined it after three years. Today, the Communist Party, following its ideological retreat, has become a regular, administrative and financial institution. The fundamentalist trends have become a "sprawling social institution". The former institution is small in size, but it participates in decision-making. The latter institution, though big in size, is not necessarily in harmony with the aims of the leadership. It may even compete with it for the loyalty of the masses. Both institutions and their respective roles undermine the efficiency of the leadership. The former institution deals with the leadership on the basis of its party interests first, whereas the latter institution deals with it on the basis of its ideological interest first. Eventually the leadership is weakened. As a result of this other organizations or factions may move to conclude agreements or alliances with either institution. Consequently the central role of the general national trend led by Fatah will be shaken. These possibilities were clearly manifest in the attitudes of these organizations (factions) towards the decision to meet with US Secretary of State early in March 1991 in Jerusalem.

To set against all these challenging issues, there remain a number of positive aspects to the relationship between the inside and the outside:

First, the presence of a broad economic, social and political infrastructure that adheres to the Palestinian constants and the PLO led by Yasir Arafat. Even Washington has had to concede that "as long as the Palestinian people is supportive of the PLO, then it is difficult to ignore it";

Second, the immunity and experience realized by the national movement inside, qualified it to continue with shouldering responsibility, taking decisions and implementing them within the Palestinian house and in the sphere of relations with others under the most difficult conditions;

Third, the PLO has become an institutional leadership, including the PNC, the Central Council, the Executive Committee, the Trade Unions and Associations, whose functions are governed by laws and regulations. It has its roots, and even branches and fruits, in the "inside". So, it is impossible to bypass it when dealing with the inside;

Fourth, the PLO has a political platform that has won the support and consensus of the Palestinians inside and outside, as well as Arab and international recognition. It comprises the Declaration of Independence, the PNC resolutions and the peace initiative that calls for the implementation of international legitimacy by carrying out all the UN and Security Council Resolutions. Therefore, its political

move does not stem from vacuity, nor does it end in a vacuum. There is a fixed national ground and clear legitimate aims;

Fifth, the PLO, under Yasir Arafat, has proved, over the last three decades, its ability to absorb crisis shocks and to remain in the leadership position. This was demonstrated after the 1970 events in Jordan, the events of the 1975 civil war in Lebanon, the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and the collapse of coordination with Jordan in 1986. The Palestinian people have repeatedly made clear their complete rejection of all forms of interference in their right to support their sovereign body, adhering to its leadership and thwarting all attempts to bypass it;

Sixth, there remains the issue of finance as a stabilizing factor in the relationship between the inside and outside. Despite the problems related to this issue, such as the reduction or holding back of financing, it has a positive side represented by meeting the minimum needs. The current situation makes it imperative to reconsider priorities and to redress mistakes. By so doing, the national institutions and their efficiency in the national movement will be reinvigorated.

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